



Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups Meeting
Friday, July 30, 2004, 9:30-11:00pm

People in attendance

Carolyn Brandeen, CWAG Treasurer
Patsy Delgater, CWAG 2-VP
Barbara Thoni, CWAG Director of Member Services
Helen Mack Davis, CWAG Elder Care Center
Judy Lindholm, Iowa County Commission on Aging
Gail Findo-Stone, CWAG Vice President
Mary Jorgensen, CWAG staff
Bob Kellerman, Wisconsin Association of Area Agencies

Tom Frazier, CWAG
Ken Mosentine, CWAG
Fred Schluter, CWAG
Doug Dalton, WisDOT
Casey Newman, WisDOT
Jonquil Johnston, WisDOT

1. Overview of WisDOT's meeting purpose and WisDOT's long-range plan, *Connections 2030*, by WisDOT staff: The Connections 2030 section of the meeting began at 9:45. Casey Newman, WisDOT, gave an overview of WisDOT's long-range plan Connections 2030. WisDOT is seeking input on transportation planning issues from larger Wisconsin cities at this point. Connections 2030 is scheduled to be completed in 2006.
2. Gathering of input from the CWAG: Discussion focused on the following issues:
 - a. Demographic Trends
Population of the 65 and up age group is growing rapidly. Between the years 2000 and 2030, this age group is expected to grow by 88.9%. The 65 and older population is projected by the Wisconsin Department of Administration to be near 21% of the total population by the year 2030. These emerging trends indicate an increasing need for varied transportation options for non-drivers. Additionally, more elderly citizens are living in single person households.
 - b. Transit Service Logistics
Traditional public transit options may not work for elderly and disabled patrons. Many are frail or need specialized care and attention that fixed route transit drivers cannot give them. It was noted most paratransit services are provided during the day. There is a need to provide paratransit or shared ride services after 4:30 p.m. Many drivers of ride services are on a volunteer basis and elderly themselves. CWAG sees an adequate transportation system as one where people have choices on how to get from neighborhood to neighborhood, from community to community, and from state to state. Safety is an issue. Many users do not use the buses or taxis due to perceived safety issues, fear, or lack of knowledge of the system. Improved signs, markings, and education would help.
 - c. Funding Programs
The County Elderly and Disabled Assistance Program (s. 85.21, Wis. Stats.) is the funding foundation for county transit operations. Medical Assistance (MA), RSVP, and Older Americans

Act are other funding sources. County providers use creativity to find various funds to fill gaps in funding. There is support for a dedicated revenue sources for transit and moving transit and other locally funded services off local property tax rolls. CWAG supports funding programs for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. They see these facilities as options for preventative health maintenance. CWAG would like to see Medical Assistance funds coordinated with DOT funding programs.

d. Rural Transit

Transit is challenging to provide in rural counties, due to the distance between origins and destinations and low population density. Often, low population density does not allow for transit options, particularly intercity and interstate transit options, despite the need. The recent cancellation of Greyhound intercity bus service in Wisconsin communities is viewed more as an opportunity to find other intercity transit options. These options could be more appropriately scaled (vans instead of large buses) and coordinated between local governments. It was noted that many communities in Wisconsin have been with Greyhound service for years. County to county trips are a large volume of traffic, particularly from rural counties to adjacent urban counties. It was noted there are still a number of counties that lack hospital facilities.

e. Coordination and Regionalism

Each county in Wisconsin currently has it's own system. Coordination of services within and between counties is key to better service provision. The State of Iowa and the Veteran's Administration system were cited as examples. It was noted that the present transit system was conceived 20-25 years ago when daily services were provided locally. Today, shopping centers, groceries stores, and medical facilities are built to be regional centers. The transit system needs to update accordingly. It was noted many people cannot get to the bus stops from their houses and that transit vans often sit idle due to a lack of system coordination. Members of CWAG noted regional planning is an important tool for coordination and cooperation. It was noted that states other than Wisconsin have regional planning commissions instead of counties manage transit systems. The merged transit system of Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee was cited as an example.

f. Miscellaneous

CWAG supports reverting to four-year driver licenses.

CWAG also supports development of bike and pedestrian facilities to make biking and walking more convenient and viable options, thus helping to avoid medical problems in the future due to sedentary life styles.

CWAG would like us to include some smaller communities in our urban outreach.